



Charleston Southern University

Sefer

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Sefer

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**According to the "Analytical Concordance of the Bible," the
meaning of sefer or sepher is derived from the Hebrew, meaning
writing or book.**

**The Sefer Literary Magazine
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The Innocence

The Innocence
Begins
In our beginning

But as we grow
It is covered
By layers
Bitter and stinging
as an onion

As we grow thicker
Our innocence becomes buried
To the point
of forgetting

Until we see
The Child
Young
Pure
And
Innocent

And we are reminded
Of what we once were
with bitter sweet sorrow

Amy Abrams

modern

In a house of fire
resides the mentality
of a broken mind.
On a cliff of doubt
hangs the hope
of inspiration left behind.
Memories try to stay
afloat in a sea
of dreams.
Unnecessary tasks
completed by
unnecessary means.
Keep the hope
keep the faith
keep the dreams strong.
Don't let petty
fetishes
break the human bond.

Lesle Porter

The Cat

This morning she picks me up like a ragdoll.
And examines me, and asks me how I stained my paw.
Ah, if I could speak! I had a busy night, that's all.
A chase, a fight - then I killed my meat and ate it raw.
Loudly purring as blood dripped from my jaw.
She has no thoughts of such things, as she
Cuddles close, squeezing the lion right out of me.
I stare up at her enormous grin,
And for the moment I am her kitten again.

Raleigh Rivers

Eno the Patriarch

'The wind was flopping a temple flag,
and two monks were having an argument
about it. One said the flag was moving,
the other said the wind was moving; and
they could come to no agreement on the
matter. They argued back and forth.
Eno the Patriarch said, "It is not that
the wind is moving; it is not that the
flag is moving; it is that your honorable
minds are moving."

Eno had blind eyes
He saw only the sun
But that fiery ball, my lad,
Will die when the day is done.
The flag--it always flies
The wind--it never dies
But our noble minds, comrade,
Are far from myriad.

Our minds they move too much
They see that we will die
They teach regret and hate and tears
Yet never rectify
It tells of sin and evil and such
Yet love is just beyond its touch
My mind is dark--but this is clear
The wind and flag will persevere .

Greg Mackey

Search

How can you tell by looking?
What is it that you see?
The feelings inside of you
May not be the same in me.
What is it you are viewing?
Can life be so unkind?
How is it you are seeing?
They told me you were blind.

You are blind to what's around you.
Blind to happiness and joy
to the beauty of a flower
or a child with its toy.

Look at me; tell what you see
And let the truth be known
You are a man of real emotion
and not a heart of purest stone.

Lesle Porter



If I Gave You The Chance

Have you ever been in the country
on a cold winter's night

Have you seen the stars
when they shine so bright

Do you know what it's like
to sit under an old oak tree

If I gave you the chance
would you do these things with me

Have you ever climbed to the top of a mountain before
and looked out at the world from heavens door

Or lain in the tall grass by a babbling brook
listening to the water as it starts its long journey

Destination unknown
do you know what it's like to be completely alone

Pat Huetle

PRAISESONG

The panorama from my fifteenth-floor room at the Monamatapa encompasses acres of marvelous gardens, an open air bandstand, and scores of intriguing works of art. Today, a cool August Sunday morning, the visual beauty of the bamboo grove beneath my window is equalled by the joyful sounds raised unto the Lord by worshippers of all ages at the outdoor prayer service. The rattlers, tambourines, and multishaped gourds and harmonious voices are accompanied by celebratory dancing. My favorite subject is a heavy-set, elderly woman dressed all in yellow. Shoulders swaying, knees slightly bent, feet alternately raised, her elegant and rhythmic movements are a blessed delight.

The invitation is irresistible. I am dressed and searching for my sandals before I even realize that being a by-stander will not suffice this day.

Ah, I will rest easy tonight.

G.A. Middleton

Harare, Zimbabwe, Aug., 1990

Blake

Blake is Blake
When he sings of Tigers,
Their skin sizzling in the night.

He sings his song to a waiting world
When he frightens us with giants,
devils,
Nefarious and alive in their printshops
Publishing "The Collected Works of Hell: An Anthology."

Blake is Blake
And he says what he will say
And this is what he says:
"Run through the wood to the pasture!"
"The path is there, right there!"
"Your mind cannot be a slave to Mind!"
Then old Blake laughs at us.
For we do run.
We find the path.
We split our world like a Chrysalis.
"Yes, my child," he says.
"Now you understand!"
And he laughs as we kill him,
Just like the Buddha on the road.

Scott Poole

Sudden Light

A flash of sudden "seeing"
Sometimes sheds light
Upon a shadowed path. . .
As when bushes burn,
On unexpected places,
In unexpected ways.

Sometimes in dark and threatening seas,
My boat has seemed too little and too frail,
Then I glimpsed a lovely sight:
Friendly harbor lights
Along a distant shore
Signaling my way back home.

When life has dealt me hardest blows
God has proved me stronger than I thought
Somehow, surprised, standing against the hurt,
I felt a healing light.
It was as if sparks had flown
From hard blows on flintstone.

And dry bushes sometimes set aflame
By sparks born of stress and sorrow?
Can lighthouses miraculously appear
Amid life's stormy seas, sometimes,
For little boats like yours...and mine?

Bushes still burn and sparks still fly,
And beams still signal safe harbors
Because a torch was set aflame one day,
When on a frowning hill,
Thunder soared, lightning flashed,
And a veil was torn, because
Easter was only hours away.

Margaret Taylor Gilmore

Black thorns

Black thorns
are my thoughts
And across that black eternity
electric memories
--in all colors--
are thrown

I grasp
for any reality known
And wonder
how far I can stretch
to absorb
these uninvited guests

As my black thorns become
saturated
and softened
by these colors of the past
I fall to the ground
and my colored mind
overflows in a hideous rainbow
of unbidden tears

Amy Abrams

My Only Friend

I had this friend
And we talked a lot
Of music and others,
Did we like them or not.

He was around a good bit.
Sometimes it was frightening,
But our thoughts together
Were quite enlightening

I seemed to forget him
When others were near
Yet, he was there all the same
When I was struck with fear.

I can remember when
We were both pretty small
I saw him always, yet,
Mom never saw him at all.

I enjoyed our time together,
The memories we'd share,
And the feats we'd accomplish
Alone, I'd never dare.

Yes, I had other friends,
Yes, there were a few.
None that could compare though,
To be so loyal and true.

Then she came along,
He was no longer needed.
But with her now around,
It was I that was needed.

As a relationship starts
Another comes to an end.
And with a turn of my head
I said good-bye to my friend.

Michael Chewning

Who Am I

I am the last burning light
The end of the candle
I am the problem
You just couldn't handle

I am the one who worried you so
I came into your conscience
And told you to let go

I opened up to you
A big and broad way
Then after a while
I let you go astray

Because you followed my lead
And to others you didn't take heed
You are now left alone
To stand there and bleed

Now the pressure is too great
Way beyond your measure
For you've fallen in too deep
Into my world of pleasure

You had a choice
And you chose my ride
I am the end
I am suicide.

Tonya Ryans

Make It Stop

We're dropping like flies, one by one,
While we're having all our fun.
Drinking, driving, flying high,
Speeding, parties, wasting time as it goes by.
Who is going to be the next to go?
Me, you, him or her, no one will know.
If we had a message from those who have gone,
It would probably say "Leave drugs alone.
Quit trying to be so brave and big,
Because like us, it's your own grave you dig."
So each time you gulp down that can of beer,
Remember your friend who you say is so dear,
And when you're speeding down the street,
Rocking, rolling, jamming to the beat,
Acting cool, playing the fool,
Remember it was your friends that thought they were cool.
My friends, take heed to the message that you read,
Or one by one, like flies we'll drop,
It's up to us to make it stop.

Inspired by the death of a friend.

Daphne Blocker

My Parents Divorce

A huge wind.
A little path.
The wind keeps on going, but my parents soon stop in a desert
lonely - with nobody there but the spirit for which they're in.
And where may I be in the middle of this?
That I wish I could go back to the beginning.
Where it was nice.
To have my Dad back.

Karola Smith



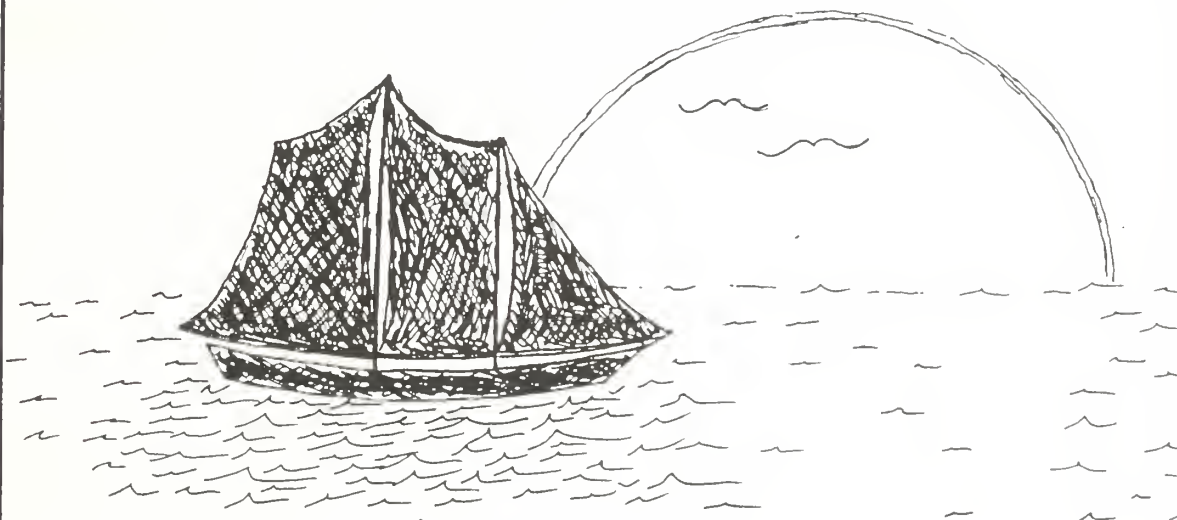
DESCENDING INTO THE ABYSS



Hidden
Emotions
They build
on themselves

Just as a balloon
It grows and
grows until
finally.....boom....

A Puddle of Tears



The Caribbean Isles
to the Baltic Sea,
ye salty spray's
'a-callin me.
A red sailed Ketch,
a white masted Yawl.
Starboard to port
I've sailed ye all.

Yet in me dreams
me mate ship sails
full'o'the air
o're ye chony rails.
Ye misty stern
nay I see
that hollowed place
where ye name-plank be.

Her sails are full
against the tide.
A sleek trim bow,
to an old sailor's eye.

Majestic and proud
on a windward heal.
My chest is ablaze
and I can feel,
ye hot young brow
of a bosen's mate
on his maiden watch,
with sences elate.

'Tis a dream!
No! I can see
A glint in her eye,
A smile meant for me.
Off with me watchcoat
and o're the rail.
Me mate-ship has found me.
With her I'll sail!

The twilight has come.
Ye old sailor's gone.
The dark sea has claimed him,
and life must go on.

SHIP-MATES

C W McManus

Love! Love! Love!

Love! Love! Love! how it treasures
The unperceived. Cold nights, cold days:
The lonely do not share the brilliant moon.
O happy moon! Shine on me!
I know of silent secrets still sighing
In the soul

The muted blush of a rose in winter is beauty.
The cry of a child unloved is of a somber syndrome
For the lament of one so crippled can
Burn the mind. It is dismal for the
Heart to break so easily. I chose
The blushing rose to grace my life.

I am an ashen dandelion and I
Race with the cerulean wind.
In my flight of silent wishes, I
Know the pain of those alone and
The flighty gladness of Erato. I
Seek the sagacious wisdom of Solomon

And flee the wrath of God. Know now
I have no dreams except those blown
North, where coldness lies forever in
Waiting. Beware! For within danger
There is beauty. I am both. The fire which burns
Inside never dies. I am forever in the heart.

Touch not the essence of my soul
But seek the love which hides within.
Within one life of love, you cry at loss:
A lonely leper cries at loss of limb.
A priest will shriek at loss of God.

I am a silent angel. I gather stars
Beneath a boundless canopy of heaven
And cast them to the earth below.
I am an omniscient creation. God is my own
Heart's child. Your beauty is mine.
In your great wisdom, can you not see me?

I am invisible to those who are
Incredulous. The sadness they carry
Is mine for they chose not happiness.
Break not the heart but the glass.
Child, give up your sweet soul to me:
I am your silent angel

Kelly S. Walls

Forever I'll Be with Bren

I can't escape the burning of Bren's mouth and eyes.
I can't escape the desire to enfold her when she sighs.
I heard Bren say love is the song sent by the breeze.
Holding her hand makes me feel like a bird above the trees.

I can't escape Bren's smile and gaze promising sin.
I can't escape the hot blood boiling beneath her fair skin.
I heard Bren say lust is the wolf that loves to bite.
Kissing her neck makes me feel like a horse running at night.

She's the glowing fire.
She's the warm daylight.
She's the humming choir.
She's the bold searchlight.
Without Bren, life's just a blur.
God, I can't ever leave her.

I can't escape Bren's raw movements and breath so warm.
I can't escape her delicious voice and bewitching form.
I heard Bren say love is the roaring of the train.
Touching her cheek makes me feel like a wasteland after rain.

I can't escape the black passion behind Bren's stare.
I can't escape her short, sumptuous, copper-colored hair.
I heard Bren say lust is the whirlwind on the street.
Kissing her mouth makes me feel like a cool wing in the heat.

She's the winter nights.
She's the right moment.
She's the northern lights.
She's the warm garment.
In a world of empty men,
Forever I'll be with Bren.

Brett Hartman

"Our Country 'Tis of Thee, Sweet Land Of . . ."

We send you on your way,
On your way to a hellish world you've only heard about.
Your daddy told you " Men don't cry,"
But you just can't hold the tears back any more.

We send you on your way to fight our war,
Yet in your own little town there's a drug war going on that
nobody seems to want to fight.

We send you on your way,
Not mattering whether you're someone's son, lover, husband or even
someone's daddy.

We send you on your way and put you behind a machine gun with
orders to shoot anything that moves,
While the sad fact is, someone did the same thing in a school yard in
your own country, the same country you're fighting for.

We send you on your way to watch our enemies burn your flag before
your very eyes, as they show their hate for your country.
And to think that some of the same people you're fighting for have
made burning your flag legal in your country. It's enough to bring
tears to your eyes.

We send you on your way and you hold your head high because you're
proud of your country.
But you can ride by the many highways and see all the litter and
you can see just how proud your country is of itself.

We send you on your way to watch your buddy get shot down in action
and die with a bullet through his head,
But the sad thing is that just last month your best friend died the
same way, except he pulled the trigger himself.

We send you on your way, on your way to fight someone else's war,
While at home, your country is at war with itself.

(Inspired by Desert Storm)

Daphne Blocker

SMOG AND LANDFILLS

VOODOO ECONOMICS



MONEY

MONEY

TO LOVE MONEY

DEATH IS A PRUNE

Cancer

While I sit in my chair of security in this small room,
I look upon the plump, pale faces of your victims.

Thinner now, I recall my own round face and lost eyes.

The eyes of those around me, I gaze into and see
the path you've left for them: pain, hurt, loneliness.

Ashamed, I look down at the pages of my magazine pretending to read.
The page seems empty, because I think of days gone by.

I hear a sound beside me. The great door to a world of sorrow.
A girl enters into Your world, another victim, another poor animal hunted by you!

She is so young, maybe nine or ten. She plays with her doll and laughs.
She doesn't know Your wrath, yet!

My own pain, like a knife, jabs into my mind. Remembering how innocent
and naive I was. She will learn to fight like me, or will she?

Again, I glance into the eyes of your victims. I see you laughing.
Another victim in your grip.

I can't help but snicker at you a bit for I have won.
I have beat you at your own game. You run through my body no more, forever!

*Dedicated to my mother for her long-lasting pain
and miraculous recovery. I love you!*

Kelly Martin

A Day At C. S.U.

R-R-Ring! Your roommate's telephone wakes you up at 6:59 and you grumble getting out of the bed because you missed a whole minute of sleep. After staying up all night writing a paper for Professor Leonard's class, you sure could have used it. It's a good thing the phone did ring because you notice the lights went off during the night and you would have been late for class. You make a run for the shower only to find it's occupied by one of your suitemates.

Finally you rush through your shower hoping you're using your bar of soap and no one else's. Since you're a little late you throw on a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt. You glance in the mirror on the way out and notice that your sweatshirt is on inside out. Oh well, that's the style, isn't it?

As you walk through Russell Parlor you notice that it's colder there than it is outside. As you go around the corner you bump into a bunch of smelly football players who had to go roll around in the mud because they missed breakfast check. You think to yourself, "Poor guys," but then you can't help but laugh to yourself when you hear one say, "Hurry up before we miss breakfast again!"

Mrs. Jean greets you at the "caf" door with a smile as you grab a tray and some silverware. You scan the food to see if they have anything different, but as usual, they don't so you settle for some eggs, bacon and sausage. The girl behind the counter says you can either have bacon or sausage but you can't have both unless you come back after eating what's on your plate. Forget that. You're in a hurry.

You sit by someone in your Religion class and you notice they're studying their book. You ask them why and they inform you that there is a test today. This is the first you've heard of it because you didn't look in your syllabus. Shame on you.

You hurry up and eat and rush to dump your tray when some ignorant person throws his silverware into the silverware tray and brown water splashes all down the front of your sweatshirt. Now you know the real reason everyone's wearing their shirt inside out and you run and turn it the other way in the restroom.

As you head out the "caf" door, you have to make your way through ducks and duck poop. You don't mind though because they give you something to look at as you're making that long walk to class. You cringe as you walk into your class because Mrs. Gooding has already written one chalkboard full of notes and now she is erasing them to start on the second. Good ol' Mrs. Gooding. Your classes go by so slow even though they're only 50 minutes each.

At lunch you grab a sandwich from the sandwich guy who really looks like he enjoys his job. You grab a seat and make plans with some friends for that afternoon. You change your mind though after you realize money will be involved because they just got some in the mail, but yours is still in your parent's checkbook.

You head back to your dorm to either study, take a nap, or watch some soaps. So much for taking a nap because when you walk in your roommates have invited friends over and they're sitting on your bed and you know you can't sleep with the radio on. T. V. is hard to watch with 4 people talking so you decide to do what you're paying to be here for, and that's go study.

You head to Little John, but there is nowhere to sit because everybody else had your idea about ten minutes ago and they beat you to it. As you head to Russell, you wonder why the T. V.'s always on when no one is watching it. You decide against it because it's too cold and you didn't bring your jacket.

Well, you're fed up with it, so you head to a park bench by the Reflection Pond to study. You sit down and make yourself comfortable and realize that at last you have some peace and quiet. But wait, what's that? Every duck on campus surrounds you and quacks its little heart out for you to give it some food. Well, you think to yourself, if you can't beat them, join them, and there you sit for the rest of the afternoon, studying in the middle of a bunch of quacks at good ol' C. S. U.!

Daphne Blocker

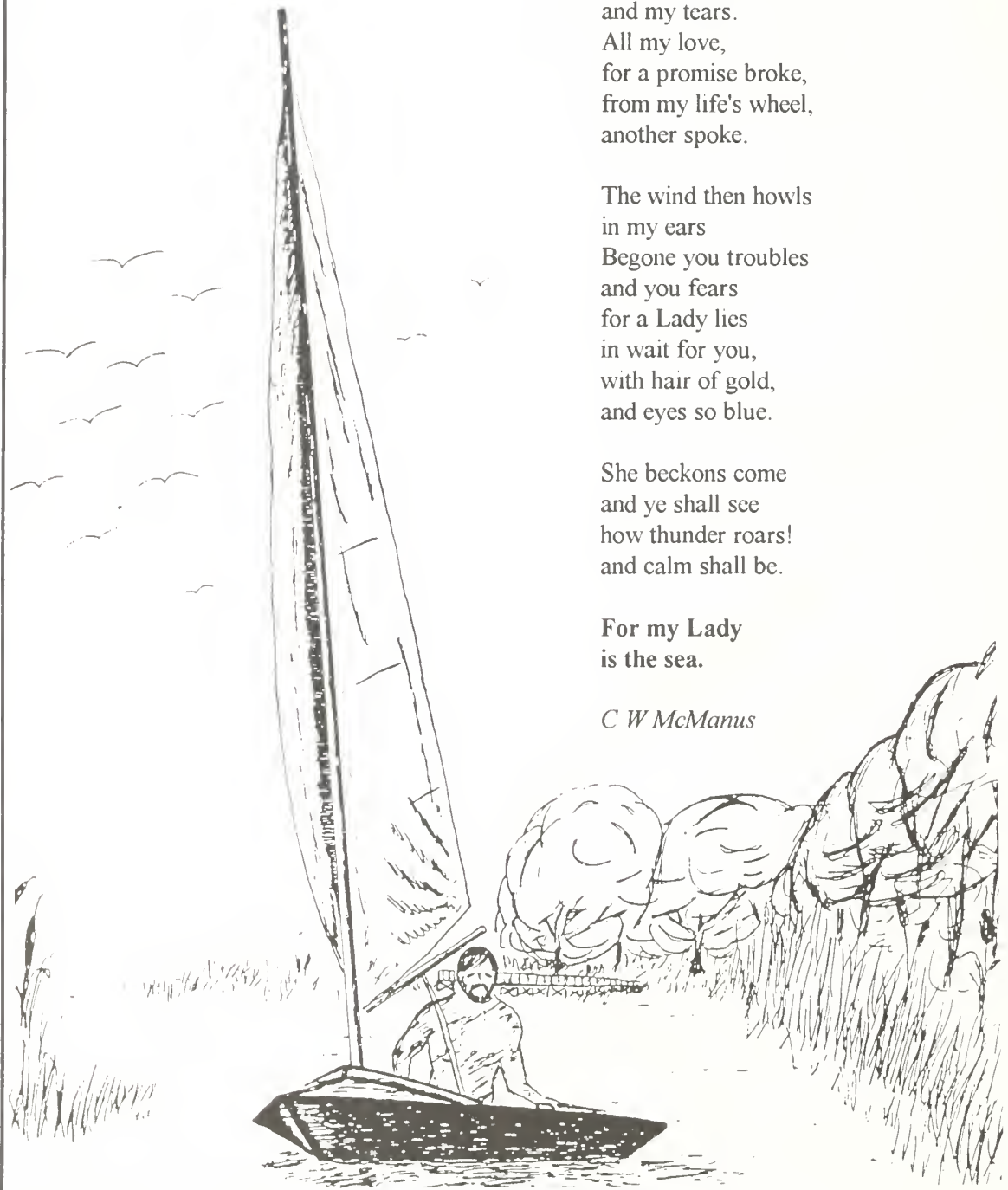
Alone I am
for all these years,
amid my heartaches
and my tears.
All my love,
for a promise broke,
from my life's wheel,
another spoke.

The wind then howls
in my ears
Begone you troubles
and you fears
for a Lady lies
in wait for you,
with hair of gold,
and eyes so blue.

She beckons come
and ye shall see
how thunder roars!
and calm shall be.

For my Lady
is the sea.

C W McManus



WHY MUST IT BE ME?

Why must it be me?
Locked away from all the world
being "daddy's" little girl;

Why must it be me?
Not being like anyone else,
but yet not being myself;

Why must it be me?
Going 'round and 'round
like an arrow in the wind,
never knowing in what direction
I will end;

Why must it be me?
Having made just one mistake,
but having to repay my
life for it;

Why must it be me?
Loving someone,
seeing someone,
thinking if that someone,
but not having that
someone;

Although life is filled with ups and downs,
we must strive to stand
in a world where hope is but a
mere breeze in the sand.

We must live life one day at a time
as if it were the last.
For we get by with some things and
for others we pay.
But be ready for Him when He comes
for He will say, if we endure,

WELL DONE THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL
SERVANT, WELL DONE!

Josephine Gamble

Lane Flies in My Gloom

The black dog snarls and watches me with eyes resembling jade,
Waiting to bite the flesh seen through my shirt that rips
Lane's in the death chamber with mute friends and deepening shade,
Waiting for me to put my mouth to her cool lips.

There's a woe hurting me like a raw wound that never heals,
For I'm the rusting motorcar without its wheels.

The black dog sits near the high wall defaced by young vandals,
Yearning for me to succumb to the pain that charms.
Lane's in the casket by the closed door and unlit candles,
Yearning for me to take her into my sound arms.

There's a dejection weighing me down like a massive load,
For I'm the broken bottle on the moonlit road.

Why do animals fear the unseen trap?
Why are the hills no longer full of gold?
Why is the night sky nothing but a gap?
Why does the sunlight of summer grow cold?
Laughing mists dress the fields with dew;
They tell me Lane sings when I'm blue.

The black dog growls beside a cart transporting seeds of rye,
Waiting to harm me and put an end to by trek.
Lane's in the hearse under smoke-gray clouds and a scarlet sky,
Waiting for me to caress her white arms and neck.

There's a sorrow moving through me like a benumbing gust,
For I'm the streambed marred by cracks and swirling dust.

The black dog holds with its clenched teeth a set of silver keys,
Yearning for me to face the chill wind moving south.
Lane's in the cold tomb by the long iron fence and leafless trees,
Yearning for me to bend down and kiss her blue mouth.

There's a grief consuming me like a fire consuming grass,
For I'm the bare house with windows of shattered glass.

Why is the soft rose withered by the blight?
Why does dark reign despite the lightning's flash?
Why does the glow of day give way to night?
Why do the fires of youth fade into ash?
Dancing shadows visit my room;
They tell me Lane flies in my gloom.

Brett Hartman

The Land Of My Mind

I am a prisoner of my thoughts
A citizen of my dreams
My soul resides in imagination
Where my world isn't what it seems

Feelings and emotions are
The rulers of my realm
Instinct presides over reality
And difference is at the helm

Sometimes thoughts get in the way
Of decisions that are made
Other times emotions override
And instinct is forced to fade

When imagination invades reality
Creativity unfolds
The heart is unlocked
And secrets are told

Lesle Porter

Waffle House

I sat down in the same,
Familiar booth as last time.
Joined by my friends,
Winston and Juan Valdez.

I could only stare
At my blank page
And struggle to find
my feelings in words.

There is so much to say,
As I search for myself
Inside myself and
In this world around me.

Taking a needed rest
From the strain of thought,
I raised my head
And took a gulp of coffee.

I saw a gentleman,
At least he appeared
To be a gentle person.
What was he doing?

He sat at the bar-
Alone, except for the
Empty cup of coffee
And half-smoked cigarette.

With a pencil in his hand.
He scratched nervously,
Or maybe frantically,
On a writing tablet.

He stopped writing,
Almost as if to think.
He turned his head slowly
And at each other we stared.

We both simply grinned
And nodded heads, together.
He went back to scribbling.
And I - I was suddenly
filled with thought.

Michael Chewning

September 24, 1984

For Stephen, my brother

The day we rode the elephant, I didn't think of Africa.
I only brooded upon the pungent, inert smell
Which made us giggle and scrunch up our noses.

I found an old photograph Daddy took of us
That day we rode the elephant. The Kodak caught you
And me still - like death - and we smiled. Your small
Hand grasped my shoulder - you knowing very well
That if you slipped off the rough gray back, I would
Join you in the dust and we would both be trampled
Together.

Perhaps we will never ride elephants together again
Though now I do think of Africa and much more.
I am older with bigger, clearer, sharper eyes. I write
And grieve about my desires and angers, invariably
Being stung by truth and actuality. I always cried
When I saw you work so hard. I thought you should have
Been drawing and sketching your own world. I
Wanted you to be a visionary, like me. I should
Have never been the only one left to dream - alone
And sorrowful. You should have thought of Africa and
The elephants we could have ridden, together, once more.

I want you young forever, a man full of love for
Himself and life. I wish God to love to love you as much
As I do for my love can only accomplish so much.
Ah, Stephen, Stephen. Pictures of you will always
Make me cry.

Kelly Walls

Man in a Thrall

It's pathetic that we're so spiritually dry.
It's pathetic that we want the biggest piece of pie.
Men say we ought to lend a hand to those in need.
You know our thoughts and desires are gripped by greed.

It's pathetic that we love only those who are well-dressed.
It's pathetic that our cities are filled with the depressed.
Men say nonconformists are scum and enemies of the state.
You all know right-wingers are the vile instigators of hate.

A fool must prance.
A fool must haul
Guns for the sake of peace
Like a man in a thrall.
It's pathetic -- that's all.

It's pathetic that we turn timberlands into trash.
It's pathetic that we'll hurt one another for cash.
Men say thieves and burglars are humanity's slime.
You all know private property created crime,

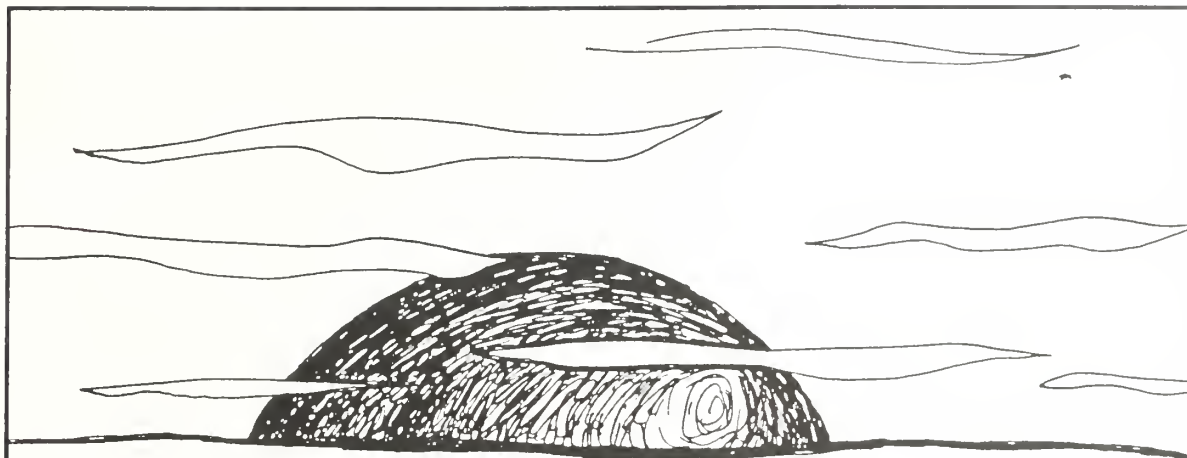
It's pathetic that we protect our stuff with dogs that yelp.
It's pathetic that the one behind bars is just a whelp.
Men say our sick world will make progress and improve, not
worsen.

You all know I don't have rose-colored glasses on my person.

A fool must dance.
A fool must maul
Pride for the sake of peace
Like a man in a thrall.
It's pathetic -- that's all.

Brett Hartman





The sea is calm.
The storm has past.
Bright stars are promising
that life shall last.
My main is feathered.
There is no roll.
And with anchor tethered
to my soul,
I search the waves
for friendships lost,
and hope the pain
is worth the cost.
Among the inlets
I do roam
to find a port,
that I call home.

sunset

C.W. McManus

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